

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) Rolling mill (1) with several rolling stands (Fi), with support plates (7), which are provided on the operator side (BS) of the stands (Fi), can be moved transversely to the roll axes, are equipped for receiving sets of work rolls (14), and border on the mill floor (9), and with pits (8), which are situated on the operator side (BS) upstream of each stand (Fi), such that the bottom of each pit (8) is equipped for moving out sets of backup rolls (12), ~~characterized by the fact that~~ wherein the support plates (7) are arranged in a support plate line, which is immediately adjacent to the rolling stands (Fi) and covers the pits (8); that the support plates (7) are detachably connected with one another; and that, to carry out a change of the backup rolls (12), the support plate line (6), either in subgroups (17) of interconnected support plates or in its entirety (6'), can be displaced out of the rolling stand area (5) transversely to the roll axes along the pit line to open at least one pit (8) and, if necessary, all of the pits (8).

2. (Currently Amended) Rolling mill in accordance with Claim 1, ~~characterized by the fact that~~ wherein the displacement area (11) of the support plate line, which follows the rolling stand area (5),

is designed as a roller conveyor with carrying rollers (19) for the support plates.

3. (Currently Amended) Rolling mill in accordance with ~~Claim 1 or Claim 2, characterized by the fact that~~ Claim 1, wherein the mill floor (18) in the displacement area (11) of the support plate line, which follows the rolling stand area (5), is sunken relative to the mill floor (9) in the rolling stand area (5), and the support plate line can be displaced above the mill floor (18).

4. (Currently Amended) Rolling mill in accordance with ~~Claim 1 or Claim 2, characterized by the fact that~~ Claim 1, wherein the mill floor (23) in the displacement area (11) of the support plate line, which follows the rolling stand area (5), is raised relative to the mill floor (9) in the rolling stand area (5), and the support plate line can be displaced below the mill floor (23).

5. (Currently Amended) Rolling mill in accordance with Claim 4, ~~characterized by the fact that~~ wherein the displacement area (11) is provided with a cover (25), which is arranged some distance from the carrying rollers (19) and forms the mill floor (23) in the displacement area.

6. (Currently Amended) Rolling mill in accordance with ~~any of the preceding claims, characterized by the fact that~~ Claim 1, wherein the detachable connection between the support plates (7) is a bolt-key connection (39, 48).

7. (Currently Amended) Rolling mill in accordance with ~~any of the preceding claims, characterized by the fact that~~ Claim 1, wherein the support plates (7) are conveyed by track rollers (26), which are mounted in the rolling stand area (5) more or less along the pit walls, which extend parallel to the roll axes, by means of bearing blocks (27).